

Remarks Prior to Discussions With President Olusegun Obasanjo of
Nigeria and an Exchange With Reporters in Abuja, Nigeria
July 12, 2003

President Obasanjo. Mr. President—

President Bush. Here, I'll stand up with you.

President Obasanjo. Is that what you want?

President Bush. Oh, absolutely. I want to be over here. [Laughter]

President Obasanjo. It is, indeed, a matter of general honor and pleasure for me to welcome you, Mr. President, to our country, Nigeria. On behalf of all the people of Nigeria, I sincerely extend to you our warmest greetings on this historic visit to our continent of Africa in general and to Nigeria in particular.

President has generally acknowledged that much has changed in the world since the end of the cold war. There's no doubt there is an emerging new world order, with new realities of nations and people throughout the world—their international outlooks, seek new friends and confirm old realities in the bid to find fresh places for global peace, harmony, and security.

In this imagined new world order, Mr. President, the rest of the world acknowledges that the United States of America will remain a key player politically, economically, and militarily. Thus we appreciate your visit to our continent as indication that Africa is to be reckoned with in the emerging world order. We salute your visit to so many African countries—four of them—and now Nigeria, in particular, as an expression that Africa should not be sidelined or even detached from the—of the emerging world order.

We in Africa realize the extent to which we are ultimately responsible for our own development and that we are the architects of our fortune or misfortune. Nevertheless, this is also generally true that hardly any country has transformed its fortunes without external support from friends and well-

wishers. That is why we acknowledge with deepest appreciation the role that the United States has played and continues to play, particularly within the G-8, in supporting the vision of the New Partnership for African Development, NEPAD. As you are well aware, Mr. President, NEPAD is our vision as well as our blueprint for making our continent great.

Through the NEPAD, African leaders have made a commitment to the African peoples and to the world to work together in developing the continent by consolidating democracy, good governance, and implementing such general social, economic development programs. Implicit in the NEPAD program are all the universal values, such as democracy, human rights, rule of law, eradication of corruption, conflict resolution, and fight against terrorism. We are hopeful that NEPAD will strengthen Africa's position in the emerging world order.

Here in Nigeria, we are making bold strides to consolidate democracy and reform our Government structures as well as the national economy. We also have continuing and new regional responsibilities, especially in the area of maintaining security. These areas require global understanding, cooperation, and substantial financial support. You will agree with me that sustainable national reforms are central to regional and global transformation and for development.

Thank you, Mr. President.

President Bush. Thank you, friend.

It's my honor, Mr. President, to be here as your guest. Gosh, we've met three or four times already. You keep telling me to come to your country—finally made it. And I'm glad we're here. It's been a—it's an honor.

Listen, Nigeria is a very important country on the continent of Africa. And because of your forthrightness and your style and your commitment, you're a very important leader on this continent, and I'm honored to be here with you.

I appreciate very much your commitment to trade and markets, and we look forward to being an active trading partner with Nigeria. I appreciate your commitment to regional peace, and we will work with Nigeria and ECOWAS on issues such as Liberia. I appreciate very much your focus on education, and the United States stands ready to help.

But most of all, Mr. President, I appreciate your honesty and openness and forthrightness when it comes to battling the pandemic of AIDS. You're truly an international leader on this issue. And the United States of America, when Congress acts, will stand side by side with leaders such as yourself to fight the pandemic of AIDS to save lives.

So Mr. President, it's an honor to be here. I've been looking forward to this visit for a long time. I appreciate your leadership, and I appreciate your friendship. Thank you very much.

Director of Central Intelligence/State of the Union Address

Q. Mr. President, do you have faith in your CIA Director?

President Bush. Yes, I do, absolutely. I've got confidence in George Tenet. I've got confidence in the men and women who work at the CIA, and I continue to—I look forward to working with them and—as we win this war on terror.

Q. Mr. President—

Assistant Press Secretary Reed Dickens. Thank you all. Thank you.

Q. Is the matter over then?

Q. Mr. Bush, what about—

Q. Do you consider the matter over, sir, that—

President Bush. I do.

Liberia

Q. What about Liberia? Is America sending troops to Liberia?

President Bush. The President and I just talked about Liberia, and we are—our assessment teams are still in place. We need to know exactly what is necessary to achieve our objectives. The first objective, of course, is for Mr. Taylor to leave the country, which he said he is—do. And I want to thank the President for his leadership on that issue. It's been a tough issue, but he's led. And the world is grateful for that.

Secondly, we've got a commitment to the cease-fire. And therefore, we need to know exactly what it means to keep the cease-fire in place. Thirdly, we got a commitment to relieve human suffering, and we need to know what that has required. And so, we're still in the process of assessing. And I told the President we would be active. And the definition of that will be made known when we're—when we understand all the parameters.

Q. See a decision next week, sir?

Assistant Press Secretary Dickens. Thank you all very much. Thank you—

President Bush. I'm not sure yet when, Randy [Randall Mikkelsen, Reuters].

Assistant Press Secretary Dickens. Pool, let's go.

Q. Thank you, sir.

President Bush. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 10:58 a.m. at Aso Presidential Villa. In his remarks, he referred to President Charles Taylor of Liberia. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.